



Department Updates

Barron County

March / April 2013

Circuit Court

Judge James Babler

Wisconsin Statutes require the Circuit Court to order parents in divorce cases to attend a program concerning the effects on a child of dissolution of the marriage. For many years, parents have been sent a program called "Children in the Middle."

Now, after much investigation and discussion, the Circuit Judges have decided to partner with Barron County Extension Office to provide this important education. The new program, called

"Parents Forever" is an evidence-based course of three hours which will be taught by Family Living Educator Missy Bablick. It began March 1, 2013.

The new program is offered at a lower cost of \$25.00 per parent and will be taught on a schedule of two times per month. Parents also have the option of taking a similar on-line course which costs \$39.95.

The Judges are extremely pleased to enter into a partnership with Barron County

Extension to provide this important and meaningful course for divorcing parents. We are confident we can provide a better program at a lower cost to the citizens by working with the Extension Office. It is yet another example of how county offices can work together to provide better public service. The Circuit Judges are indeed thankful for the cooperation and assistance of the Extension Office in making this all possible.

Register of Deeds

Margo Katterhagen, Register of Deeds

It has been a busy past few months for the Register of Deeds office!

With the wonderful help of the Maintenance Department – we successfully re-vamped our entire office! With our new arrangement, our records are more user friendly to not only the staff but also to our customers.

At the end of January, we welcomed DiDi Gilmore-Olson to our office. DiDi had previously worked at a title

company and was very familiar with the software programming that we use.....so she was off and running by the end of her first day with us!

I'm happy to report that Chief Deputy Steff Heffner is cross trained in the processing of death & marriage certificates, eliminating any unnecessary wait on these vital records. Since taking office, we have used just over 1,800 vital certificate paper! Processing vital records is a huge part of our work day.

But what we are most ex-

cited about in the Register of Deeds office is that we are recording documents the same day that we receive them!! We have streamlined the recording process allowing us to be more efficient!

What's next for the ROD dept? We are moving forward with getting our older records available online. This "back indexing" project is going to be huge, but in the long run, having our recordings available online will be very profitable for the county.

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Health & Human Services

Judy Demers, Director

To date, 2044 households have received assistance through the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program with payments totaling \$1,137,971. This is comparable to the previous heating season.

Since the closing of the Cumberland Healthcare Psychiatric Unit on 12-31-12, a total of 37 involuntary hospitalizations have occurred. Thirty-two of these took place at Eau Claire hospitals, 2 at Amery Regional Medical Center, and 3 at Winnebago Mental Health Institute. The number of hospitalizations is similar to this period of time in 2012.

Under Governor Walker's budget proposal and provisions in the Affordable Care Act, indications are that workload could significantly increase for the Economic Support Unit at the local level. Some factors contributing to this are:

- Childless adults who are currently on a waiting list for the Core plan will be transitioned to the Badgercare Plus program. There are over 150,000 individuals on the waiting list statewide. They will need to apply at the local agency to have eligibility determined
- Statewide, it is estimated that 87,000 parents will lose eligibility for Medicaid due to proposed

changes to income eligibility and will need to access health care coverage through the health care exchange. In order to access the health care exchange, an application will need to be processed by the local agency.

- Individuals who do not have access to employer-sponsored health insurance will need to access health care coverage through the health care exchange for which an application will need to be processed at the local agency.

Since the budget is not yet finalized, the actual impact will not be able to be determined until August or September.



Clerk of Courts

Sharon Millermon, Clerk of Court

As of February 19, 2013, e-Filing is now available to file family and civil cases in Barron County. Small claims e-Filing has been available since August, 2009.

Only 19 of the 72 Clerk of Circuit Court Offices in the State of Wisconsin offer any type of e-Filing at this time. The e-Filing option is encouraged to be accessed by all court users including attorneys and individuals not represented by an attorney. Four advantages to e-File are:

- Access to court system and documents 24 hours a day

- Time and cost savings (no time away from work and postage savings)
- Low cost to participate - \$5.00 per case
- Filers simply access <http://www.wicourts.gov>, register online and you are ready to begin to file cases – no special software is needed for filers.

In addition to the above advantages to filers, e-Filing lessens court's storage needs and less paper is handled by Clerk of Court staff.

A press release to local newspapers has been sent, letters to attorneys and

e-Filing informational slips are included in return mailings advising out of county attorneys of Barron County's e-Filing availability. We are working hard at getting the word out.

For more information and to view an online demonstration, access: <http://www.wicourts.gov> – click on eFile/eCourts and then click on circuit court eFiling to get started.

Human Resources

Rachael Richie, HR Director

<u>New/Replacement Positions</u>				
<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Office/Department</u>	<u>Incumbent</u>	<u>Date Filled</u>	<u>New/Replacement</u>
Part-time Civilian Communication Officer	Sheriff	Michelle Lowe	4/5/13	Replacement
Part-time Civilian Correction Officer	Sheriff	Recruiting		Replacement
Seasonal Park Caretaker	Maintenance	Recruiting		Replacement
Sanitarian	Health & Human Services	Recruiting		Replacement
Assistant Veterans Service Officer (AVSO)	Veteran's	Recruiting		Replacement

County Clerk

DeeAnn Cook, County Clerk

The Spring Election is just around the corner. A fairly good turnout is expected since there are several contested races at the municipal level. We will be posting results to our website as they come in. If there are no technical issues with the GAB reporting system we enter results into, viewers should be able to see all of the results

including state, municipal and school races. If for some reason there are problems with their reporting system, we have a plan in place but it would be for state and county level races only.

In odd years, such as this, there are only two regularly scheduled elections, February and April. This year, it looks as though we will be setting up for at least a few school referenda special

elections. The entity that calls for a special election has to pay the entire cost of the election which includes things like programming of the voting machines, poll workers, legal publications, etc. When a school referendum is in conjunction with a "regularly scheduled" election, there are some additional expenses but significantly less than when a special election is called.

Committee Updates

Jeff French, County Administrator

LCC/Extension:

This Committee did not meet in January.

February meeting: Approved the 2012 Wildlife Damage Abatement claims of \$11,007.40.

Also approved:

- moving their meetings from Monday at 7.30am to Tuesday at 7.30am
- Two certificates of compliance for area farmers meeting the Farmland Preservation Program
- Erosion control project reimbursement for a completed project on Red Cedar Lake
- \$400 in additional annual fees to the Standards Oversight Council

and Envirothon

- Notice of non-compliance for an area farmer

March meeting endorsed a letter of support for State Funding of the County Land Conservation Departments.

For the April 2nd meeting this Committee will be reviewing Farmland Preservation requirements.

Property Committee:

This Committee continues to work on an Ice Racing Ordinance, discussions with Lamar Advertising for the placement of a sign at the Rice Lake Hwy Shop and Mikana & Haugen Dam repairs. All other actions by this Committee have either been forwarded to the Executive Committee or County Board as appropriate.

Executive:

Actions by this Committee have been included with my monthly updates as part of the County Board Agenda.

Solid Waste Board:

February: Approved up to \$20,000 for upgrades to computerized interface with scale.

March: Reviewed and approved final DNR air permit application, including the ability to burn pharmaceuticals.

This Committee continues to work on a renewal contract with ZAC Inc and staff is working on a long-term Capital Improvements Capital Outlay plan.

Office on Aging / Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC)

Charlene Oftedahl, Director

Newly formed Barron County Care Transitions Coalition

Close to 20% of patients on Medicare return to the hospital within a month for reasons that are related to the initial admission. More than 85% of these re-admissions are unplanned. Staff in the ADRC and Office on Aging are very aware of the negative effect this has on people's lives and of the costs involved. 20 to 40% of readmissions are preventable. In the past few months we have been instrumental in organizing a Barron County Care Transitions Coalition. In addition to us, coalition members include representatives from Lakeview Medical Center, Marshfield Clinic, Cumberland Health-Care, Mayo Clinic Health System – Northland, NorthernBridges (managed care organization), local nursing

homes, and home health care/hospice organizations. The coalition's goal is improve the quality of care for people who transition between health care settings. This includes transitions from hospital to home, or between hospital and nursing home, or from nursing home to home. The coalition will be analyzing local re-admission data and looking for common causes, as well as sharing best practices. (Statistics from the Center on Medicare and Medicaid Services.)

50 Plus Challenge to Live Well, Sunday, April 21, noon to 3:00 p.m. at Cedar Mall in Rice Lake

Encourage "older" friends and family to attend this annual event which has drawn a crowd of over 300 people in the past few years. The event includes free health screenings, a presentation by Dr. Meghan Pesko of Marshfield Clinic, entertainment by John Pisa & Friends, drawings for donated prizes,

and many information booths on health and safety. A new addition this year is the Barron County Sheriff's Department with information on avoiding scams and a drop-box for unused and expired medications.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers class being offered

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is an evidenced-based educational program designed to help family caregivers. Facilitators are Gloria Vaughn and Chris Hagen. The six week workshop series runs from April 17 through May 22. The cost is \$10.00. For more information and to register, encourage family caregivers to call the Office on Aging at 537-6225.

Veterans Service Office

Scott Bachowski Veterans Service Officer

Dawn Anderson, Assistant Veterans Service Officer resigned on March 25, 2013 to take the Director position at the Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Spooner, WI. I wish Dawn well with her future endeavors and believe she will excel in that position. Congratulations!

The 2011 Geographic Distribution of Veteran Affairs Expenditures (GDX) statistics have been released by the Department of Veteran Affairs. The listing includes VA Compensation and Pension; and, Readjustment

(Education) and Vocational Rehabilitation expenditures. The GDX also shows the estimated veteran population for each state and county. According to the 2011 statistics Barron County has a population of 3,841 Veterans; those veterans are receiving \$10,800,000 in VA Compensation and Pension (C&P). As a comparison, in 2010; Barron County had 3,934 veterans and received \$9,400,000. This data certainly reflects the dedicated service of the Veterans Service Office.

Barron County Veterans received \$734,000 worth of Education and Vocational Rehabilitation benefits in 2011 up from \$663,000 in 2010. This

benefit is educating our veterans and supporting our local Educational Institutions.

I will be attending our bi-annual training conference in Richland Center from April 29th through May 3rd. Beginning in May, I will be devoting a great deal of my time to train the new Assistant Veterans Service Officer.

As a reminder, the Memorial Day ceremony at the Wisconsin Northern Veterans Memorial Cemetery will be held on Sunday, May 26th at 1:00.